

### **Alexandria Circulation System**

Our Alexandria Circulation System was created by Companion Corporation. They have been in business for over 20 years and have a customer base of over 10,000 libraries.

One feature I especially like about Alexandria/Companion Corporation is that technical support is available 24/7. You can reach a technology expert any time of the day or night. Another great thing about Alexandria is that all updates are free. Once you have purchased the product, your only expenses are tech support and any add-ons you request. For example, we pay a yearly fee for Sneak Peak which allows the kids to see images of the books when using the OPAC.

For the most part Alexandria is easy to use. The features we use the most are circulation, cataloging, and reporting. It's easy to check in, check out, renew, manage patrons and items. Cataloging is simple as well. Alexandria will search for MARC records to be added to the data base. On the rare occasion no records are available, an email can be sent requesting the information, and viola, it appears within one day. Importing data from vendors is simple as well.

A variety of predefined reports are available in Alexandria. You can use the reports as is, you can customize them, or you can create your own.

The OPAC has several search options for the kids. They can use the Simple Search option which allows them to search by author, title, subject or key word(s). If they need more specific results then they can use the Boolean Search. For the students who need an easier search option they can search using a Browsible Explorer. The Browsible Explorer can be filtered and customized in a variety of ways. The filtering feature can be used to create bibliographies.

Alexandria is working on improving in a couple of areas. I haven't worked with the 6.0 version yet, but I understand it has addressed some of these issues. One thing I want to do is have the kids create Podcasts that will appear on the records when a particular record is loaded. At this point in time, doing this would be complicated. I could add a link sending the patron to a URL where the Podcast is housed. The patron would have to scroll to the bottom of the page and click the link in order to view the Podcast. Also, a folder with all these Podcasts would have to be installed on each OPAC machine. I understand from their tech team that this will be much simpler with version 6.0. Another thing I don't like about Alexandria is that if a student misspells the title or author's name when searching, they don't get any results. There's no great way for them to get results if they can't spell!

Below is a link to Amazon showing "related media". I've never seen this on Amazon before but it's definitely a great addition to the search results. This sort of thing is what I hope to add to our records when we get version 6.0.

[http://www.amazon.com/Odd-Frost-Giants-Neil-Gaiman/dp/0061671738/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1256844688&sr=1-5](http://www.amazon.com/Odd-Frost-Giants-Neil-Gaiman/dp/0061671738/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1256844688&sr=1-5)